# PRECISION NATIONAL

Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III ■ Superfund Fact Sheet ■ September 1999


# Monitoring Well Sampling Continues

## *Drinking Water and Soils in Residential Areas are Safe*

In January 1999, seven sets of monitoring wells were installed at the Precision National Plating Services Superfund Site in Clarks Summit, Lackawanna County. In each set, there is a shallow well, an intermediate well and a deep well. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) and Pennsylvania Department of Health selected the locations of the wells. The wells are located downhill from the Precision facility along the old trolley tracks and in the Ackerly Fairground.

A set of wells were also installed uphill from Precision for the purpose of collecting background information, which will help EPA determine how the contamination is moving through the groundwater. The purpose of these monitoring wells is to determine the depth and breadth of the chromium plume that has originated from the Precision property.

All monitoring wells were sampled in April, May and August of this year. The data shows where the highest concentrations of chromium and other metals exist. The data also leads to a preliminary definition of the path of the plume in the groundwater, its origin and the depth at which the contamination primarily occurs. These wells will be sampled on a quarterly basis until EPA is satisfied that the configuration of the plume is adequately defined.

### Residential Well Sampling

The data analysis from the residential well sampling within the one mile radius of the site has been completed. The residents whose wells were sampled have been provided with the results, which indicate that their water is safe to drink. On June 16 and 17, 1999, four more area residential wells were sampled. The residents have received the sampling results, which show that their drinking water is safe.

### Soil Sampling

Residential soil sampling took place on May 3 and May 25, 1999. The soils were sampled for the metals antimony, arsenic, chromium, selenium and thallium. The concentrations of chromium in the residential soils ranged from 6.96 parts per million (ppm) to 156 ppm. Concentrations of chromium in the soil up to 190,000 ppm are not considered a health threat by state or federal health standards. The concentration of arsenic in one resident's soil sample exceeded the State's Health Standard by 2 ppm. Arsenic in the soil is well below EPA's risk-based concentration. Arsenic is a naturally occur-

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*Continued from page 1*

ring element in coal-bearing regions. Selenium and Thallium were not found in concentrations that pose a threat to human health or require EPA to take action. Sample results have been provided to all homeowners.

**Ecological Risk Assessment**

An Ecological Risk Assessment for the site is currently underway. The risk assessment will look at the negative impact that the site contamination, specifically metals, may have on the wildlife and the environment. The metal of primary concern at the Precision site is the two forms of chromium: hexavalent and trivalent.

The purpose of an Ecological Risk Assessment is to:

1. Identify which contaminants are present and pose an ecological risk.
2. Identify and characterize the current and potential threats to the environment from a hazardous substance or substances.
3. Generate data to be used when identifying cleanup levels that would protect those natural resources.

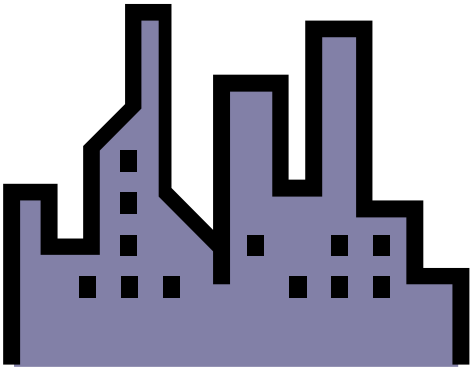
On June 16 and 17, 1999, representatives from EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and ThermoRetec collected sediment and water samples from Glenburn Pond and Ackerly Creek. The streamwater samples will be used for analysis of metals including hexavalent and trivalent chromium and other metals of concern.

At each sample location, five gallons of stream sediment were also collected. The sediments will be used for ten-day toxicity tests to determine the damaging effects on fresh water amphipods, a fresh water insect and the common earthworm. The earthworm will be used to determine the degree of bioaccumulation of the contaminants found in the samples. The amphipods and the fresh water insect are a source of food for fresh water fish, while the earthworm is a source of food for birds, shrews, and other small animals. Therefore, these toxicity tests will provide information not only of the effect on amphipods, insects and earthworms, but the entire wildlife food chain in this particular habitat of Ackerly Creek and Glenburn Pond.

**Plant Demolition**

Precision National Plating has contracted with ThermoRetec, Inc. to decommission and demolish the Precision facility. EPA's Administrative Order does not require the demolition of the Precision facility. Therefore, Abington Township has regulatory authority for demolition activities. Accordingly, Precision and ThermoRetec have applied to the Township for a demolition permit and have provided the township with a work plan for the demolition. ThermoRetec must file a Notice of Demolition to both federal and state agencies.

EPA and PADEP consulted with Abington Township and provided recommendations on what the demolition work plan should include. The work plan that ThermoRetec prepared includes a schedule, a description of planned activities, demolition methods, dust/odor control measures, health and safety measures, a transporta-



tion management plan and a list of disposal facilities.

EPA will provide oversight and, as necessary, will perform the following activities if the building is demolished:

- pre-demolition inspection,
- air monitoring during demolition, and
- post demolition sampling around the perimeter of the foundation.

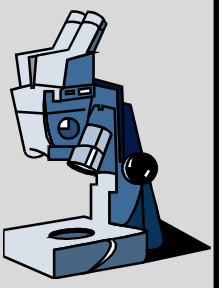
ThermoRetec has recently completed cleaning the processing equipment, which Precision has sold. The process equipment is currently being removed from the facility and shipped to the purchasers. When the removal of the process equipment is complete, ThermoRetec will return and conduct a full cleaning of the Precision facility.

For Further information on demolition activities, please contact Jennifer Lynch at the Community Information Line at (540) 585-4098. ▣

## Visit Our Web Site

For more information about the Superfund Program and other EPA programs, visit our Web Site at **http://www.epa.gov**.

# Four Seeps Sampled in May



On May 26, 1999, ThermoRetec collected samples from four of the nine seeps along the abandoned trolley track directly below the Precision Site. The seeps sampled were the "bathtub seep", the "cinder block seep", the "trolley track seep" and the "murphy seep." ThermoRetec was unable to collect samples from the remaining five seeps because the seeps were inaccessible or dry. The chromium concentration in the bathtub and cinder block seeps were consistent with previous concentrations from samples taken less than a year ago. Concentrations of antimony, total chromium, hexavalent chromium, iron and manganese in the seeps are shown in the table.

In the past, the concentration of chromium in the trolley track seep has been approximately 6,000 parts per billion (ppb). Results from this round of sampling identified only 74 ppb of chromium. The lower levels may be due to drought conditions. Since the source of the seeps is the groundwater, the data provides significant information about groundwater flow and migration of the contaminants of concern.

In order to protect human health and the environment, the trolley track seep is fenced preventing any human contact with the seep. EPA and Pennsylvania Department of Health have recommended that the cinder block seep and the bathtub seep be fenced as well. ▣

**Table: Concentrations of Metals Found in Four of the Nine Seeps (ppb)**

| Metal | Bathtub | Cinder Block | Trolley Track | Murphy |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Antimony | 58.3 | 33.7 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| Chromium(III) | 4710 | 3010 | 74 | 5.4 |
| Chromium(VI) | 4100 | 1000 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| Iron | 250 | 256 | 47300 | 391 |
| Manganese | 87.7 | 281 | 2460 | 163 |

## For Site Records and Other Information . . .

Information about the Precision National Site is available in the Administrative Record file. The Administrative Record file is EPA's official collection of documents, data, reports and other information that support EPA's decision for cleaning up a site. You may review the Administrative Record file at the EPA Administrative Record Room, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19103. Please call first for an appointment, (215) 814-3157.

Certain site-related information is also kept locally at the Abington Township Municipal Building, the Abington Community Library, and the Glenburn Township Municipal Buildling.

**For More Information**

To find out more information about the site, please contact one of the following EPA representatives:


**Richard Kuhn**
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**1650 Arch Street**
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## Inside: Information About the Precision National Superfund Site


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